Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme in Maharashtra

428. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme is a Centrally sponsored programme for towns having population of less than 20,000 (twenty thousand) based on 1991 census;

(b) if so, the details in regard thereto;

(c) whether, as per 2001 census, there were very few towns with a population less than 20,000;

(d) whether the Government, of Maharashtra and other States have requested the Union Government to increase the population norms of 20,000 to one lakh population for 'b' and 'c' class Municipalities to include more towns under the programme;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Central assistance is provided to the State Government to the extent of 50% of the project cost of water supply scheme to such towns with a matching share to be provided by the State Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Under Water Supply Programme (AUWSP).

(c) There are 160 small towns in Maharashtra with population less than 20,000 out of 2854 towns in the country as per 2001 Census.

(d) and (e) The then Chief Minister of Maharashtra requested the Central Government in July, 1996 for relaxation of norms to cover towns with a population upto 1 lakh, No specific request has been received from any other State in this regard.

(f) The proposal to extent the coverage to towns with population upto 1,00,000 was taken up with Planning Commission who were of the view that it would first be desirable to saturate all urban population living in towns having 20,000 population instead of extending it to towns with population upto one lakh. However the State Governments have been requested to include towns with population upto 20,000 as per 2001 census for Central assistance under AUWSP with the approval of Planning Commission.